Warning: messy feelings

Disclaimer: I don’t own anything.

Summary: Semi-AU. From a young age, Midoriya had his voice, among other things, beaten out of him. But when he becomes the first Quirkless Student to be admitted into UA’s Hero’s Program, he thinks he’s finally taking the first steps to be the Hero he’s always wanted to be.

Alt: It’s a long on-going fight between Izuku and the Entire World and Everything About it. But Izuku is certain that he’ll only lose if he gives up.

A/N: *“I am tired of my grief.”*

A/N: “It’s not a mistake. I’m not an error.”

Pairing: ¯\\_(ツ)\_/¯

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### Notes

* Mute!Deku
  + Traumatized out of a voice. Bakugo put hand on his neck and boom boom pow
    - He is physically fine (sorta). The scar is pretty ugly though. It hurt a lot as a kid, and eventually got out of the habit of talking. Not like anyone hears him anyways.
    - Gets fucked up almost every day of his life. And is marked as a trouble child that they find beaten up in alleys (after a day of getting beat up and he’s passed out in alleyways like trash) and found in early morning like “kid, stop getting into fights” & “kid’s just desperate for attention” like it’s his fault that people are coming for him
    - Carved the fuck up. Huge burn scars. Scars like someone tried to hack his limbs off.
  + “Heroes will save people who need to be saved. If I… I never got help, doesn’t that mean I never needed to be saved?”
  + Realizes that every villain seems to have a similar mindset, backstory, are still human, and just… “isn’t there something wrong with the world then? Then, as the person who understands that, doesn’t that mean that he has to do something about it?”
    - From the moment he’s six, it’s like the universe sprayed him with something that made all the worst in people come out against him. Hero, villain, civilian, it didn’t matter. If they could be cruel they were.
    - Like, he’s bullied at school. Minor (other) characters beat the shit out of him every week, almost alternating, because it’s fun and they can get away with it and their message clearly isn’t getting across if he can keep getting back up
    - And he acts like this is nothing.
    - Overhaul takes him for a week and mostly leaves him alone otherwise
  + “Hard work doesn’t lie” is his motto. Sometimes, it’s the only thing that keeps him going
  + Skills: Endurance EX. Pain Tolerance EX.
  + Special: Forgiveness (and when maxed out: Unconditional Empathy)
  + OFA only ‘works’ when he wants to <protect> someone. Used airwhips first.
    - Ends up with AFO? The two quirks cancelled each other out?
* Bakugo
  + Doesn’t think this is bullying. Because he’s so used to it that it’s just engrained in both him and Deku that this is just how it is
  + Tells everyone that it’s not “Izuku’ but “Deku”. and it’s not like Deku can tell them otherwise
* UA & Society
  + Society: ½ enraged like “a quirkless hero? What is the world coming too?” and the other half is like “he’s trying so hard” / “if he can do it, so can I”
  + People berates him, publically humiliate him, and is used as a reason for why everything that goes bad does. Villains think he’s just an easy target.
  + Aizawa: Doesn’t Think he’s going to make it, but Nezu says he’s not allowed to expel him.
  + 1-A’s Class President is Quirkless & Quiet.
* Many Villains:
  + “Dude, that Deku guy is the biggest Fuck You to society.”
* Stendal -> Stain
  + Izuku’s #1 fan. Has been keeping an eye on him. The kid that should have become a villain, had every right to be a villain
  + The Hosu incident becomes nomus going for deku, and deku saves Stain from critical injury. Because heroes protect people. Stain converts.
  + Eventually gets Dabi, Spinner, and Toga.
    - Determined to ‘save’ Izuku from society and the dirty pros who never bothered to save
* LOV
  + A group of villains who want new world order and shit. Awkwardly works with Stain & Co.
  + Shiragaki got personal history with Izuku
    - Thought that izu would have taken his side.
  + Eventually: Re-Destro & Twice & Compress & Magne
* Overhaul & Co
  + Sees the Quirkless Hero-in-Training during the Sports Fes. is disgusted with the world
  + Kidnaps izuku. Who doesn’t eat or drink or anything, but he doesn’t glare at them either. He’s not upset or angry at them. This is normal tuesday.
  + Explains themselves. Izuku wonders how long they’ve been waiting for someone to listen to them, that they had to resort to kidnapping a high schooler. And they get really attached to him.
  + Overhaul & all 8 escape (Overhaul manages to escape. Nighteye isn’t dead. Mirio loses his quirk. Eri is saved. 8 precepts caught but ‘rescued’ via Shiragaki)
    - Overhaul chooses the 8 and decides to work with Shiragaki for the Greater Goal
    - Ecstatic and shocked, and Chisaki doesn’t really get it himself, but he’s a little more human, a lot more humble
* Liberation Army
  + The literal polar opposite of Midoriya and everything he stands for
* Speech
  + “How come it’s always his fault for not speaking? How come it’s never your fault for not listening?”

### Timeline

* Primary School
  + Midoriya (5): gets fucked and can’t speak. Starts primary school
  + Gets fucking wrecked on. Every goddamn day.
  + Shiragaki finds a kindred Spirit.
* Middle School
  + Dabi sees a deadman walking. He burns him to make him flinch but he doesn’t. It’s interesting. He doesn’t think heads or tails. It’s painfully obvious that the kid wants to be a hero and he wants to snuff that dream. But those eyes haunt him.
  + Chisaki kidnaps him, overhauls him over and over but his eyes don’t change. He’s not angry or anything. Just. Tired and a little sad. This guy, with this super-amazing-godtier quirk, thinks that this is the best thing he can do for the world
  + >> Dont you dare fucking pity me << because they don’t recognize sympathy
  + Gone for a week. Returns to “he’s traumatized so he can’t speak; he’ll never recover, etc.” & “Wow even kidnappers returned you?”
* 10 Month Before Entrance Exam
  + All Might announces retirement. Because he feels OFA fading (assumes that it’s because AFO isn’t around and so it’s naturally fading away because doesn’t need it anymore)
* Letter Comes In
  + Midoriya, to everyone’s shock including his own, gets in to the Hero Course at UA. Class 1-A. Even his mom is shocked.
  + Is invited by All Might’s secretary to meet him and offers OFA. Begin training. Also gets All Might’s number.
* High School
  + Gets OFA, but it doesn’t activate.
  + Aizawa is Against Him. wants him to drop out or go to Gen Ed. Kid is walking hazard.
  + Midoriya is elected as Class Prez (because Ura & he votes for him) with Momo. Tentative friendship.
    - If anyone knows how hard Midoriya works, it’s Momo
  + Awkwardly staring at BakuDeku like “that’s wrong” but what are they going to do when they come home from the same school and are like childhood friends and shit
* Sports Fes
  + Todoroki mess -> to fight without his right arm until Todoroki uses his other side. Getting off of him to ‘restart’ the fight every time. Essentially throws the match and suffers severe burn/ice wounds but Todoroki, for a moment, forgot about Endeavor.
  + The whole world feels like they hate him. People stop him to mock him. He gets picked on. And the whole world is just okay with that
* Internship
  + Gran Torino: “Geez. I really got my work cut out with this one, huh?”
  + Stain the Hero Killer vs the Silent Hero In Training, the Angry Hero In Training, and the Confused Hero in Training
    - Stain is charmed by the silent Hero in Training.
    - Nomu abandons orders & guns for Deku (no one knows why, but probs
* Kouta
  + Midoriya finally finds his voice. He finds it when he sees Kouta’s terrified expression and gives him a big smile because, “I’m here.”
  + Kidnap Bakugo ends in failure.
* Dorms
  + Moving into dorms means that he loses his home. And he no longer has any safe space, or any place he can associate with safety. He trains more.
  + But Midoriya gets these fucking dreams (nightmares). And working hard to make sure he doesn’t ruin his dorm room
  + The class does get closer to him. He’s expressive as fuck. A little jittery and nervous and a really, really, really hard worker.
  + “And now you’re leaving, too?” inko v izu and izuku really wants to know how to save his mom.
* Something Shifts
  + Aizawa tells Midoriya that he did a good job (something something class reports) and Midoriya feels his eyes water because he? Did? Good? What? And Aizawa is beginning to realize that he’s looked at this wrong this whole fucking time
  + Probably gets harassed by a journalist somewhere and his friends from 1-A finally, finally, finally come to his rescue. It goes up online, Kaminari yelling, “This is my friend! This is our class prez! And there is no one that works harder than him!”
  + Hard work, izuku thinks, doesn’t lie.
* Hero License
* Overhaul
  + They save Eri when she comes out of that alleyway to be protected and Midoriya recognizes Chisaki and Chisaki recognizes Midoriya
  + severely berated and reprimanded, and Midoriya is prepared to lose his license over this. But he doesn’t because holy shit did this girl need saving
  + They commence the raid, but it’s too late. Chisaki already skipped town.
* Support
  + Eri changes something in Midoriya, just like Kouta did
  + Heroes save people, yes, but people save heroes at the same time too
* School fes
  + OFA finally works & Midoriya gets airwhips (because he has finally earned the right to use it(?))

### Elementary School - ShiraDeku

There’s a kid with batwings in his preschool. He knows him because he loves showing off his wings, and honestly, it’s the coolest thing ever. Midoriya feels himself getting distracted at the sight of them. He wants to touch them and record how they feel.

He sees that kid getting approached by an older man, and he doesn't think, he just moves.

### MS : Post-kidnapping

Midoriya sees an opportunity for freedom and makes a wild break for it.

To his shock, it works.

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After the kidnapping incident that people call a failed runaway incident, people share their condolences with Inko and life moves on.

“Thank you, thank you for coming back,” Inko said, arms wrapped around him and sobbing.

He… He didn’t want to make her cry. He didn't want to make her sad. No one listens when he tries to speak, and no one waits for him to get a sound out. He wants to let her know that he didn’t leave her because he wanted to. He’s not like dad, he wouldn’t do that. But no one hears him and he can’t write fast enough to get that to her. With how hard she’s been crying, he doesn’t think that she could read his chicken-scratch handwriting anyways.

The time he had with Chisaki, even if there were no lingering injuries, he swears that he can still feel it. He can feel a pain that isn’t there, and he undergoes full body aches that wake him up in the middle of the night.

Midoriya Izuku is 13 when he’s officially labeled a ‘troubled teen’ in the books and they close. He’s in his rebellious stage, indicated by the fact that he chooses not to speak.

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“Well there was no way you got kidnapped,” Bakugo laughed loudly, “Not even a kidnapper would want you! And if they did,” he snorted, “you were brought right back right?”

And Midoriya doesn’t even think he’s wrong.

### MS: Inko & MS Teacher

“Oh! Uhm… Midoriya-kun? Yes, he’s very quiet. A diligent student. He… Oh wow, he has a perfect attendance too!”

Midoriya Izuku’s homeroom teacher talks about his student like he’s surprised himself. He talks like he doesn’t understand, and he’s seeing this for the first time himself. He talks like Midoriya is just a fucking ghost in his class, just another 8-didgit identification number that he has to push out of this school at the end of the year.

He is, like every teacher that Inko has ever met, the exact same.

### Yagi-san

Midoriya’s jaw unhinged as he stared at All Might deflated in front of him. He stared in gobsmacked horror, and the Hero, the Number One Hero in the fucking nation, shrank down in front of him.

“I think,” he said, “that you can be a hero.”

### Entering UA

Midoriya is so fucking overjoyed at the thought of coming to school.

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### First Day of Classes

Midoriya Izuku shines in nothing. Having him here makes Aizawa think that they were getting this kid ready to just send him straight to his death. No amount of brains can win against some of the shit in the world and in the uncertain world after All Might’s retirement, it felt cruel to send the kid to his death.

But Aizawa was not allowed to expel anyone. The orders came from top-down, that they need to be pushing out as many heroes as possible.

He squints at Midoriya Izuku, the first and only quirkless person that UA has ever admitted, and can already see his future. Dead in an instant, or locked into an office job at a hero office. His space would have probably been better used for someone else.

But whatever, at his untimely future, Aizawa would be able to say that it was Nezu’s fault for overriding his expulsion.

Fucking christ, what was the world coming to?

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Midoriya Izuku, and he doesn’t know why this wasn’t in his files, was fucking mute. He didn’t know if he was actually mute or if he just didn’t want to speak, but one glance between Bakugo and him made him lean towards the second.

There’s another kid too, Koji, that’s just as quiet but he can tell with a glance that it was because he was shy. Two heroes-in-training, both of them flinching at their own shadows, and they’re both in Aizawa’s class. Great.

### Training (1) - V Kacchan

“I’m looking forward to seeing what you can do out there! Put up a good fight!” All Might shouted, bright and energetic. His eyes lingered on Midoriya, hoping that he could clearly understand his words.

And Midoriya, who never had expectations to live up too, nodded back.

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“C’mon, you quirkless fuck! Get out here, you walking target! I’ll blow your fucking dreams out of you!”

“...And he wants to be a hero?” Jirou deadpanned.

“He doesn’t have to say it like that, but I see his point,” Yaoyorozu said quietly, “being quirkless in this field is a huge disadvantage.”

“Don’t forget,” All Might cut in, “Midoriya, like everyone else here, earned his place here.”

And on the screen, they watched as Midoriya gave Uraraka a nervous smile and stepped out into a hallway.

“No way,” Kaminari gasped. “Full… frontal confrontation.”

Midoriya lifted his hands up, balling his hands into fists and stood with an uncertain expression in front of the blond. He opened his right hand, and beckoned Bakugo.

“You’re gonna die. Here and now, you fucking shitface.”

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Midoriya, after an entire childhood of being beaten down several pegs, has a special ability that only seasoned fighters and the fearless has. He, when someone comes swinging at him, can keep his eyes open to follow each and every swing, even if it comes dangerously close to his face.

Most people would close their eyes when something comes exploding and screaming at their face.

Midoriya is not most people. He is also, however, not a seasoned fighter or fearless. So Bakugo’s first explosion made full contact with his arm, and it blew him to the side. He was knocked straight first into the wall and the plaster cracked under the sudden force of his body hitting it.

His class winced.

“Hey… All Might, aren’t you going to stop this?”

All Might, objectively, knew that he should. He knew what happened when someone with as much hate and explosive energy like Bakugo went for someone. He had seen in plenty of times, and plenty of those times, he had come too late. He knows what happens.

But watching Midoriya get to his feet like nothing was wrong, watching him shake his limbs a little and roll his neck, watching him slip back into a fighting stance with focused eyes made him hesitate. And it didn’t matter how many times he got hit, how many times he was shot down, and what Bakugo seemed to say, Midoriya looked more and more focused.

His clothes were ripped, burnt, ashen, and the resulting dust and debris covered his skin. Yet, his gloves and his pants were nearly completely unscathed. The gaze in his eyes remained steadfast and suddenly, All Might realized that he was waiting for something.

“Just fucking stay down!”

Bakugo charged with reckless abandon, destroying his comm link and taking each and every progressive step to lose his temper. His hand went to pull off the grenade, unleashing a force of energy that demolished one of the walls, and the class stood in stunned silence.

The camera cleared, and Midoriya’s face filled the screen. His eyes, blown wide at the destruction that narrowly missed him, turned back to Bakugo’s approaching figure, and he smiled.

It wasn’t a nasty smile to provoke him. It wasn’t the nervous smile that he stepped onto the field with. It was a bright smile that showed all the joy in his life in one expression. It was an unashamed, unabashed, bright gleam that made his face look far younger than he was.

Midoriya Izuku, in the face of possible, gorey, death, smiled like a child on Christmas.

And if fueled the fire in Bakugo.

“Why are you smiling?! You fucking shit, smile at this-”

Midoriya finally took the offensive. He dodged the first hit, as though he didn’t sustain any damage before, and gave a sharp jab at Bakugo’s side. The man hissed, clearly slowing down since the start of the fight whereas Midoriya moved like he had gotten in fresh.

Bakugo growled, swinging one of his hands down to set off a series of explosions and Midoriya hugged it to his chest as he used Bakugo’s extended arm as a support to swing his leg around and land a solid hit to his temple. He released him and dropped to the ground, rolling over his head to get up on his feet while Bakugo staggered back.

“You.. fucking bitch,” he said. “You were holding back on me? You think that you can take me at my full power? Alright, then, fine.”

He readied his next grenade.

“Die.”

Midoriya’s smile tightened a little, and he ran fearlessly in. Bakugo waited for the perfect time and never expected Midoriya to throw a small rock at him. It hit him square in the neck, ruining his concentration and in that split second that was lost, Midoriya closed the distance.

Bakugo fired right as Midoriya punched his arm up, just managing to throw off Bakugo’s entire balance so that the shot went up diagonally. Midoriya lost half his mask, hood, and shoulder sleeve at that, and the building lost an entire corner of the structure.

“Hah, good try,” Bakugo said, shooting his other hand out to grab Midoriya by the shoulder, the undeniable fizz of Midoriya’s skin burning against the heat of his quirk, and the young man kept smiling.

The blond narrowed his eyes, “Stop fucking smiling, you fucking-”

And the roof came down.

The dust cleared and All Might got ready to run in to get the students out, when the buzzer blared loudly.

The heroes had won, the villains had lost. The class watched as Uraraka threw up in the corner of the titled building, while the uninjured Iida stared slumped in defeat. And then, they focused on the mess that was Midoriya, who had tackled Bakugo out of the way of falling debris before passing out in the man’s lap, his leg crushed under one of the debris.

“...All of that,” Kaminari whispered out, “And he risked his life to protect Bakugo?”

“Damn,” Kirishima said, “That’s manly.”

“What’s manly about that?!” Hagakure snapped back, “That’s awful! If this was real, that would mean that a villain would have gotten away and we would have lost a hero!”

The implications were heavy, not just in what their classmates were willing to throw away for a training session, but also what it would spell out for them as soon as they graduated.

The objective was cleared. The heroes won. There was no sense of victory.

Nervously, the students eyed All Might, who didn’t react in time, who let the scene played out knowing that a certain tragedy was playing out in front of them like a trainwreck in slow motion, and then the spectacle in front of them.

Midoriya was excused from class, and quickly carted away to Recovery Girl, while All Might turned to the class. He had a duty to fulfill, and even if he couldn’t, didn’t, do it for Midoriya, he would do it for them. He would do this right.

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Midoriya is alive and lucid when he’s carted into the infirmary. Aside from the awful state that he’s in, she’s more surprised at how calm he is about all of it. He’s not in shock, she’s seen shock and this isn’t that. She has no doubt that the adrenaline had worn off, and all thoughts of lecturing Yagi drains out of her mind at his clear, calm eyes.

She’ll focus on lecturing him later.

She gives him a kiss first and gets to wiping off all the ash. His hand weakly comes up to try and stop her, but he was as weak as a kitten in his state. She makes quick work and stops cold when she wiped down the ash right at his shoulder and sees the mess of scars.

Midoriya gave this sigh, like he was giving up now that she saw. When she turned to him, felt conflicted at the sight of resigned defeat.

Did… Did he think that she was going to hurt him? Not physically, but emotionally?

“...Midoriya-kun,” she said, very, very gently, “...I was wondering if you can answer me a question about your scars. Where did they come from?”

Because the scars on someone’s body told you who they were. Pros who have criss-crossing scars showed the accumulation of all the battles that they have seen and walked away from, and serve as a reminder that they are just as human as the people they are trying to protect. Some children have some scars, small in number and amount usually, that tell an adventurous story about learning how to live in the world for the first time.

But Midoriya Izuku is barely 14 and he has these old scars that tell a terrifying story, and possibly the truth, behind the reason why he cannot speak. Under her trained eye, it looked as though someone wanted to take something from this boy and make a mark that could never go away.

There are scars, things that Recovery Girl recognizes as a particular kind of evil, that run across his body. Whoever did this thoroughly mutated his skin, and some of them look like they’ve never received proper care or treatment. From all that she saw from his shoulder and upper left torso around it, she swears that she can see that someone had taken literal chunks out of him, and his skin healed poorly over those injuries. It brings these questions into her head, doubts in her mind, and a crippling sadness in her heart that she doesn’t ever wish upon anyone else.

He taps her hand frantically. When she turns to him, he traces something on her hand and it takes her a moment before she realized what he’s trying to do.

“One second,” she said, rushing to her desk for a pad and pen.

<< Please don’t tell my mom. >>

Ah, she realized. She understood too much now.

"...She deserves to know," she said and Midoriya's eyes welled up as he desperately shook his head. She didn’t want to know, but she knew that knowing would be more helpful. No matter how hard it was, to be alone would be worse.

The young man’s shoulder trembled, and she could tell this was physically and emotionally exhausting him, and he scribbled something else down.

<< Please don't let anyone know. I want to tell them myself.>>

Her heart ached, as it always did when she had to treat a child.

"...Alright. I'll take your word for it," he brightened, a feeble little light with no noteworthy presence. "However," she continued as Midoriya deflated at the words, "if I think this is getting worse, I will tell someone for you."

His eyes met her and he nodded. With that, he left the infirmary, exhausted and scarred, and she wondered if they were doing the right thing.

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The last thing he expected to see when he left was Bakugo Katsuki.

He stared.

“...Not going to say anything, you fucking nerd?”

Kacchan, he wanted to say, is everything that Midoriya admires. He would never want to be him, of course, because he was such a unique energy. But like how people stand underneath the sunlight to soak up the sunlight after a long period of storm, Midoriya wants to bask in Kacchan’s radiance.

“It’s like, your entire existence was made to annoy me,” he continued on. “Why are you even here? This… This was supposed to be my safe place from you. Why do you have All Might’s attention? How did you fucking get in here? There’s no way you sucked dick for this-no one would want you to begin with. So, just, fucking answer me, you fucking curse! Why are you here”

He, this time, manages to smile back to him.

“...Even if you somehow manage to graduate from UA’s Hero department, no one is going to take a worthless, Quirkless piece of shit like you. And even if they did, you’ll just be a walking casualty waiting to happen.”

Midoriya nodded. Bakugo’s red eyes focused in on him, and he hopes that this time, his old time friend and greatest source of light would be able to see him.

“You crazy, suicidal bitch. If you’re going to die, go do it in a corner and out of everyone else’s way.”

Midoriya’s smile turned exceedingly warm, and he nodded again.

Bakugo stared at him, his face scrunching up as he rushed at him. “Are you fucking deaf?! Didn’t you hear me? I just told you do go die! I told you, the same way I’ve always been telling you, to just fucking die! If either way, you’re going to die anyways, why hold it off, Deku?! You’re just a Deku! No one is going to miss you!”

The man nodded again.

“So why are you still smiling!?”

Midoriya didn't respond to him, and this time, Bakugo had the inkling feeling that he was the one that was going to be left behind. The blond yelled in frustration, and for the first time since their relationship turned out to become something like this, Midoriya walked past him and out the school gates.

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The following day, Midoriya was back in class. He had a slight limp, but was overall, perfectly fine. He gave them a polite bow when he came in, gave a smile to the people who greeted him, and was overall acting like nothing had happened.

In front of him, Bakugo was silent. He scowled when their eyes met, but otherwise gave no inclination that he even existed to begin with.

### Classes

“Uh… Seat 17, introduce yourself and go ahead and read the next passage.”

Midoriya stood up and stared at the teacher.

“He’s a fucking mute, sensei,” Bakugo called out lazily. “Waste of space, we all know. Can we move on now.”

Ectoplasm jerked at the crude way of the blond’s speech and stared at Midoriya and then to his files.

“Is that so? Please come to the teacher’s lounge after this. And don’t curse in class.”

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“You didn’t tell me that he’s mute!” Yamada said, “God, I called on him in the middle of class! Do you know how embarrassed he must have been!”

“He isn’t mute,” Aizawa shot back. “None of his medical papers submitted have any indication that he’s mute. The kid’s just quiet.”

“Oh, so he’s just shy?”

Aizawa nodded, shooting a dark glare at his fellow teachers for daring to interrupt his nap, “Don’t show him any favoritism. We need to break him out of his silent treatment as soon as possible. God, what a pain.”

“Isn’t this something trauma related?” Ectoplasm asked, “That one boy seems to be… exceedingly volatile to him.”

Aizawa snorted, “Not an excuse to not speak. Koji needs to be brought out of his shell sooner rather than later. He’s here because he wants to be a hero, isn’t he? What, is he going to just hide from his fellow heroes for the rest of his life?”

The blond he grew up with shot him an uncertain look, “Well, we don’t know-”

“And we won’t know unless he speaks up,” Aizawa replied back, cold and callous. However, he did relent a little and sighed back, “There’s nothing in his record that indicate anything rougher than some schoolyard tusseling, and he has a record of running away.”

“Running… away?”

The man nodded, “And breaking the minor curfew set for students almost every week. Kid’s a troublemaker as it is, don’t give him this too. He’s expecting special treatment since he’s quirkless. We need to break that out of him ASAP.”

He gave shot them a glare.

“If you’re done,” he said, staring at the door meaningfully.

“Y-yeah,” Yamada said, backing up.

### Student Class President

Midoriya is elected as Student Class President. It is a responsibility that he has always taken, since people are always so quick to pawn this duty off to someone who has no presence. It’s fine. He’s used to it.

And then he realizes that it means he’ll probably spend even more time with Aizawa.

From the look on his homeroom teacher’s face, he’s just as thrilled about this as he is.

“Wait, wait!” someone cried out, “Revote! I demand a revote!”

“That’s just a waste of time,” Aizawa snapped back. “You made your choices. Live with them. Now, these are your class representatives for the year.”

Yaoyorozu gave a nervous smile and a small bow. Next to her, Midoriya was frozen stiff in his anxiety.

“It’s fine,” Bakugo said loudly, “As soon as it gets too hard, you’ll just run away again, won’t you, Deku?” he asked, a cruel smile on his face.

Midoriya didn’t even bat an eye.

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### USJ

Their rescue training falls apart when a flood of villains comes for them.

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Midoriya prepared himself for the next hit, but the last thing he expected was for the Nomu to grab him around his chest, pinning his arms down to his side, and pick him up like he was some plastic doll. He wheezed at the feeling of his ribs being pressed and swears that he could feel them cracking, but they don’t give out. Whether or not that’s a good thing is something he hasn’t figured out yet, but he allows himself to be taken.

It has been some time since he’s felt this awful.

It… It was unnerving that this Nomu could literally pick him up with one hand like this, and it further showed just the difference between them. He doens’t have any idea how he could fight this, as it was now, and wondered if the other teachers would be here soon.

No matter what happens to him, he doesn’t know if he can buy anymore time. Vaguely, he wished that he woke his mom up before he went to school, if only so that he had one more opportunity to tell her he loved her. As it was, he just hoped that UA would cover the funeral costs and that there would be a body for them to return to her.

“I… I had hoped that I saw it wrong,” he raised his eyes to the guy who once terrorized him as a child, “...You? You… You want to be a hero?!”

The Nomu’s grip around him got tighter and he let out a shaky exhale. His organs were going to rupture. They were going to slide out of his ass. This was it.

Everyone was right. He was just another casualty waiting to happen.

“Out of everyone, you betrayed me?!”

He wheezed a little harder, as he was dropped to the ground. Here came the part that he was more used to. Shiragaki pulled his leg back and rammed his foot into his gut as hard as he could. The action broke something inside of him and lifted his entire torso off the ground before he crumbled back to the ground. He huffed, unable to even whimper in pain as the foot came down onto his collarbone.

What… does he mean by betrayal? Midoriya’s head spun at the thought. All his memories of Shiragaki was always the same thing. They met. He couldn’t escape. He was beaten the shit out of. He was abandoned and found by a policeman in some dumpster at some odd hour in the morning and returned home as a troubled youth.

When, he wonders, in all that time, did they ever build any form of emotional rapport?

“Where’s your hero now, Izuku?!” Shiragaki snarled out, every bit the nightmare that has always haunted him. His foot came down with increasingly faster frequency and harder stomps onto his broken chest, and Midoriya felt blood coat his mouth. “Tell me! Come on! Speak up! Where’s your hero?!”

“I AM HERE!”

Midoriya choked on the air as he tried to gasp and collect the breath in his lungs. The Nomu had dropped him in favor of protecting Shiragaki, and he crumbled to the ground. He choked and tried to futilely get up onto his feet. He wasn’t going to get in the way and then, suddenly, he’s picked clean off the ground and nearly pukes his guts out at the feeling.

He looked up and froze when he saw All Might. He wasn’t smiling. He was just standing there imposing and threatening, and not at all hopeful. For a moment, he doesn’t recognize his idol, even though he was in his arms. He gives this raspy gasp, and the arm that isn’t as broken as the other. He pokes at his idol’s chin, in a futile attempt to raise the corner of his lips just a little bit.

The action made the man pause, and he looked down to Midoriya.

The young man wondered, how he could communicate to him that he needs to smile, he’s the Symbol of Peace and look, if he’s here, and he could hear the other teachers, it means that they’ll be okay now. He tries his absolute best to put some more strength and energy and pulls up the corners of his own lips.

There, he wants to say, like that.

“I’ll get you for this. I swear to god, Izuku, I’m coming for you. Ow, fuck. Fucking heroes,” he hears the fading voice. He doesn't know if the tone was getting quieter because the man was leaving or because his consciousness was fading.

As it was, Midoriya was carried on a stretcher out, unable to even breath, an incredibly hopeful voice in his heart whispered out traitorously.

< But you survived. >

-

A hundred or so miles away, and Midoriya would never know this, something a little more sinister would also be celebrating the outcome of the USJ incident.

“Excellent,” All for One chuckled, “He’s learned of betrayal.”

### Recovery Girl - P2

He woke up exhausted out of his mind in Recovery Girl’s infirmary. He sat up, rubbing his neck and hissed when he felt pain lacing up and down his entire body. The amber lights of sunset flooded the room, and he’s dreading the thought of all the time wasted.

“...You’re not fully healed,” Recovery Girl said, catching his attention. He turned to face her to indicate that she had his full, undivided attention, “If I pushed your body any further than that, there would be nothing left of you. You need to take it easy for the next two days you’re off. If you feel any form of pain or something is wrong, don’t hesitate to contact me,” she said. “We already called your home that you will be late, but no one picked up so we left a message instead.”

That’s… fair, Midoriya thought with relief. His mother was at work. He really hopes that they didn’t bother her with something as trivial as this. He got up, and when he swayed, quickly recovered. He gave a full bow, and hoped that she understood that he was grateful.

“...Midoriya-kun, you understand that what you did was incredibly stupid, right? You could have died.”

But he didn’t.

He looked up at her and nodded.

“...And you would do it all over again, wouldn’t you?” she asked.

He nodded again, a small smile on his face and she sighed deeply.

“That’s awful,” she said, shaking her head. “Well, here are some gummies. I think LunchRush is still here, would you like me to ask him to set something aside for you?”

His stomach lurches at the thought of food. He didn’t realize how hungry he was until she brought up food. His mouth salivates a little because LunchRush has the best fucking food he’s ever tasted, but stops himself and shakes his head.

It would be better to eat with his mom tonight. So that she can see for himself that he is fine. He thinks that’s better and hopes that he can get home in time to make sure the message box is clear before she comes home and realizes something is amiss.

“...I think you should get something to eat. You are very low on energy and calories,” she said.

He shrugged back and ate the gummies. She sighed again.

“Exactly the same,” she muttered darkly. “Well, you’re done here. There will be no classes for the next two days, so spend that time to properly rest up young man. I don’t ever want to see you here again.”

He nods again, but doesn’t leave.

She stares at him for a moment and pulls out a pad of paper. She passes it to him. “Here, this is faster. You need to be getting home before it gets dark, so just write it down. It’s okay, I have the time.”

He flashes her a grateful smile and scribbles down his thoughts. He crosses it out twice before he hands it back to her.

She stares at it and immediately softens.

“Yes, Midoriya-kun, Aizawa-sensei and Thirteen-sensei will be fine. ...I… You were the only student casualty. No one else was injured and no one died.”

She stared at how bright his eyes got at the words with an expression Midoriya couldn’t put into words. She took a deep, long breath through her nose and looked back down.

“Don’t think that you did well,” she said sternly. “There is nothing heroic about being carried off the scene because you were so badly injured.”

He nodded back, but his expression didn’t change and that annoyed her.

“You get going now, young man.”

He gave another bow and exited the room. Still a little groggy and exhausted, he ran his shoulder into the doorway, but managed to stay on his feet.

He felt like shit, but his heart remained light.

-

### Leaked

Just like that, it was all over the news.

That soundbyte of All Might talking to someone but the most important thing was what he said.

“Midoriya Izuku will be my successor. I’m certain that he has what it takes.”

Maybe Midoriya Izuku had been living too peacefully, or he was too happy or something. Regardless, what small amount of peace he had he would treasure, because he would never get it back again.

### Concerns

“...Sensei, how come you’re letting Bakugo walk all over Midoriya?”

Aizawa looked up from his papers to his student, “...I’m not letting him. Midoriya is.”

“But shouldn’t… shouldn’t you step in, kero?”

“I’ll step in if it becomes too much,” Aizawa said, “But how can he call himself a hero if he can’t even help himself?”

Asui frowned, but the words rolled in her head. She understood the idea, but she didn’t like it.

“Asui, I run a tight ship. Don’t waste my time with this.”

“...Yes sir.”

### Texts from Number 1 (1)

>> Good Morning, Midoriya-shounen!

>> Good morning, Yagi-san.

>> How are you feeling?

>> Good.

Yagi squinted at the screen. Now what?

>> Have a good day!

>> Thank you! I hope you do too!

He beamed at his phone.

### Sports Fes - Number 1

“And amazing! The person that won number one wasn’t even one of the main contenders! Here he comes, the Dark Horse, Midoriya Izuku of Class 1-A!”

Midoriya rolled over onto his back, nearly wheezing as he slowly got up to his feet. He looked even more surprised than anyone else that he had won, and he looked wildly between Bakugo and Todoroki as the two stared at him in just as much shock.

“What a shock! And to think, we haven’t even seen his quirk yet!”

“He doesn't have one,” Aizawa said.

“Uh, what?”

“He doesn’t have a quirk,” Aizawa said, voice loud and clear, “He is UA’s first and only Quirkless student in the Heroics department.”

For a brief second, the entire stands went silent.

And Midoriya lifted his fist, as though to show that he was here. He was here and no one was going to be able to dispute the fact that he had won over each and every single other contestant there. He had stood at the top, without a quirk, and stood as the living evidence that a quirkless person can do it.

His eyes found his teacher in the stands, ignoring the other words that began to come out.

“What?”

“I heard that a quirkless student got in through regular admittance but I thought they would have dropped out by now.”

“UA’s… really grasping at straws, aren’t they?”

And instead of the respect and rancorous cheering that any other quirk-user would have had, the winner of the first round was met with doubt. The excitement of the crowd, who went wild at the speculation that a dark horse had won, fizzled out into shocked proclamations and confused spectators.

And all along the way, Midoriya kept his head up.

“What an amazing blow-out! Hey, Aizawa-sensei, most of those kids are your students right?! What are you teaching them?!”

Present Mic easily took control of the situation again, but the lingering doubts wouldn’t ever dissuade.

### Sports Fes - Calvary Battle

“A pen? Sorry, but anything I give you can be seen as favoritism,” Midnight said, apologetically. “Besides, as a hero, you should learn how to communicate better.”

Midoriya walked back to their group, no little amount of suspicious gazes watching him. With a deep breath he squatted down to the ground and started scratching out his idea for the team, but Hatusme frowned.

“Sorry, Deku, that’s really hard to read,” she said. “I can bring my babies down here, but I don’t have any writing utensils either since they wouldn’t let me take them down.”

Tokoyami, who had joined their group out of curiosity, wondered what Midoriya would do. He hasn’t heard him speak once, and unlike Kosode, it didn’t feel like it was because he was shy. He eyed the bandages, and wondered how a silent, quirkless boy got into the best hero department in the nation.

Sitting with him everyday at school didn’t bring that out, and he wasn’t there to see why Midoriya was so injured at the end of USJ. Tsuyu and Mineta didn’t like to talk about it, but what they did say made it clear that they didn’t know either.

So this was his next best opportunity. The fact that he won first, against Iida and Todoroki who were made for these kinds of races, or Bakugo and Uraraka who had a drive to get out there, outlined something but he couldn’t quite put it into words. But imagine his shock when Midoriya turned to face him and beckoned him closer, like he was Middoriya’s first choice.

No one has ever done that for him before.

Of course, it wasn’t like there were many opportunities, but it was far and few in between that he was picked as someone’s first option.

He watched in abject horror as his classmate lifted his hand to his lips, bit down on the nail of his index finger, and ripped it off. Uraraka gasped and Hatsume’s eyes widened. Before they could say anything else, however, Midoriya began to retrace the idea he had before in his blood on the ground.

Midoriya, Tokoyami would begin to think, is fucking crazy.

-

Winning by the skin of their teeth, Midoriya Izuku and his team made it into the next round.

So overjoyed that he was about to start crying, he threw his arms around Tokoyami and hugged the man tightly. His classmate spluttered at the entirely overly-dramatic display of gratitude and emotion, but Hatsume and Uraraka quickly joined the two in a mess of laughter and cheers. Even Dark Shadow was involved, as they reached out to affectionately (and a little roughly) tousle his head.

Dark Shadow preened under the attention, as everyone gushed praises. Tokoyami, however, eyed Midoriya with no little amount of surprise. Leave it to their Class Representative to be the one that was really good at strategizing and the likes. They really lucked out with this one.

They could say all they want that Dark Shadow and he was the reason why they won, looking from the way Uraraka and Hatsume looked at Midoriya, he has no doubt that this wouldn’t have worked nearly as well if it wasn’t for the general. They were probably just a little frustrated, because the orders and the ideas would have worked so much better if Midoriya would call out the orders, but that wasn’t a luxury and still, they would advance to the next stage.

And looking at Midoriya, it was clear that he didn’t think that at all.

### Sports Fes - TodoDeku

If anyone thought that Todoroki was going to sweep the competition after seeing the battle he had with Sero, they were biting their nails at the edge of their seats during his fight against Midoriya Izuku.

Of course, the Quirkless kid should be the one that’s forgotten, right? It was a shock in and of itself that the Quirkless kid even made it this far anyways, and that was something that everyone wrote off as a fluke. The first fight against Shinsou just proved that. He had picked up the boy and thrown him out of the ring as soon as the bell rang.

As it was a kid from the General Studies department, those that watched that fight just assumed that the curriculum that came from training their bodies between the two departments was massively different. They would never know how disappointed Shinshou felt-unable to even use his quirk even after spilling his entire life story to his opponent- and the hopes of the General Studies department snuffing out when he was tossed out.

But fighting Todoroki was something different.

“Give it up! You can’t speak, right? You can’t just admit defeat like anyone else. We both know that I’m much stronger, so just step out of the ring!” Todoroki snapped out. It wasn’t very sportsmanship-like, but no one really wanted to see a kid get torn apart and tossed around in such a one-sided fight.

It should have ended there.

As it was, Midoriya calmly put his dukes up. The silent message was clear to everyone who was watching.

Todoroki gritted his teeth, Midnight repeated again that she would stop the fight if it became too much, and the fight began. Her eyes rested on Midoriya, and it was clear that even he believed that Todoroki would win.

Midoriya rushed in, shocking the crowd, and was met with ice.

The first case of ice came and swallowed him up. It was similar to the earlier fight against Sero, but where the entire boy was caught in that, only Midoriya’s arm was caught against the ice, like a fly in a spider’s web.

“Just give up! There’s no point to this!” Todoroki snapped out.

And Midoriya stared at his arm for a moment, before he pulled his teeth back into a grimace. Everyone watched in shocked horror as the young man tore his arm out of the ice, unflinching when he lost skin and sprayed blood. In the resulting shock, he turned and ran for Todoroki without missing a beat.

Todoroki, recovering from the shock that this guy just sacrificed almost all the skin on his arm getting out of his ice, didn’t reel back in time, and Midoriya managed to punch him in the face with his bad arm. It was a strong hit, and combined with the fact that he was startled, he went to the ground.

As he hit the ground, he pushed himself back up, and snapped his head up. He had seen this guy fight in some of their training, he wasn’t the type to just step off. He stared and watched as Midoriya turned his back to him, and walked back to the center of the ring.

He turned back around, as though to restart the match from where they were first told to start the match, and brought his bloodied hand up and beckoned him closer with it.

Was he even injured? Todoroki was beginning to think that the blood on his skin was a gimmick. He was friends with that strange mechanic girl, right?

“Are you… Are you crazy?! You’ll never have an opportunity like that again!” But Todorki gets back up, and he centers himself back onto his feet. The hesitation is gone and he fires the next wave of ice.

Midoriya leaps and the ice catches his foot. Without a second longer of hesitance, he tears his foot out of it. He loses his sneakers, sock and the bottom part of his gym uniform but he rolls onto his side and barrels straight for Todoroki. The distance closes and when Todoroki tries to take a step back to create more distance, Midoriya tackles him down to the ground. The shock of what his quirkless classmate was trying to do had severely shaken his judgement and reflexes, and he was paying dearly for it.

All the air expelled out of his mouth when he fell flat onto his back, and knocked his head against the ground. It’s probably not as painful as it could have been, but it startles him. He takes two heaving breaths before he remembers that he’s in a tournament battle and shoots up to sit up.

He stares, where Midoriya is already staring at him from the center of the stage. He lifts his injured hand up, and beckons him one more time.

“You-What do you want?!” he screamed out. “What the hell are you trying to prove?!”

Midoriya didn’t move from his posture, his eyes clear and focused, even though there was blood running down his arm and dripping off his elbow. He doesn’t look upset, and he doesn’t seem to mind the pain at all. Looking just at his face, anyone would be hard-pressed to say that the kid was injured.

And for Todoroki, it felt as though he was meeting Midoriya for the first time.

He got back up, a scowl on his face, because he wasn’t going to take this. He was going to fight back. He was going to climb to the top without using that man’s filthy quirk. He was-

Abruptly, he realized that Midoriya’s right arm was completely uninjured. He was standing in a typical southpaw style, and he doesn’t know what to do with this information. Why did this feel strange?

Whatever, he stands at the ready, and again, starts with ice. Unlike before, he fired off three continuous shots, ready to coat the entire fucking stadium in ice if needed and a shoe came flying at his face. He froze that where it was, and as it hit the ground, Midoriya came out like a bull.

Maybe it was because he was always running next to people who can propel themselves forward with their quirk, Todoroki wasn’t prepared for the speed that came after him. He was slow, in comparison to his classmates, and his lightning fast reflexes (that were honed to handle something much faster) were too fast. However, unlike before, he was starting to get a better read on this guy’s rhythm and his speed and found himself adapting. He was just a little too fast in his reaction, and got a hit in the gut because of it.

For a guy a head shorter than him, he packs a punch. He hits twice with his left arm, swinging back as needed, and then swings his head in to smash Todoroki’s nose against his head. He stomps down on one of his toes and gives a swift and heavy kick to the side of his ribs.

No amount of reaction could prepare him for the combatant onslaught that was Midoriya. He was trained in several different types of martial arts, but he’s never fought something as sloppy as his classmate right now.

Todoroki crumbles to the ground for the third time, spewing blood from his nose and mouth, and by the time he’s coherent again, Midoriya stands at the center of the ring, waiting. Around them, the speculations and the crowd could be heard loud and clear.

“What are you waiting for?!”

“Stop playing around in there!”

“Man, I never thought that a quirkless kid could put up a good fight though.”

“Nah, the problem is the fact that Todoroki isn’t doing anything. He’s a mess out there.”

-

When Midoriya does well, it’s because the others are not in good shape.

When Midoriya does not do well, he is living up to expectations.

These are facts that he lives with. And yet, and yet, standing in front of Todoroki Shoto, he thinks he can forget everything. All he can see, in front of him right now, was a kid who looked so lost and so hopeless, that he doesn’t know what else to do but open up his hand and beckon him closer.

He doesn’t really get what’s going on in this guy’s head. But he knows that he’s Endeavor’s kid and that he has two different quirks. He only uses his ice-quirk, but Midoriya has heard that he has capability for fire. And right now, where everyone else was hauling ass and risking everything for the top, he was only using his ice-side.

It felt wrong.

The first couple of fights they went against, Midoriya knows that he wasn’t focused in on the fight. There was no way that someone as strong and agile, as tough and as smart as Todoroki-kun, who has massively powerful quirks at his beck and call, could lose to him. He was only losing right now because he, like everyone else, underestimated him.

If, by per chance, Midoriya ever got into a fight with someone who took his seriously from the get-go, he knows that he’ll probably die then and there. Until he’s able to call All Might’s quirk his own, he supposes that he needs to treat that line carefully. As it was, he was going to milk it for what it was worth, and he got back up to hit Todoroki in the face.

This time, the ground froze and he didn’t jump up in time. It froze one of his shoes and he tore his other foot out. One foot was fine, the other had no more skin at the bottom of his foot. He didn’t have his shoes and socks anymore and he understood that he couldn’t make that mistake again. If he’s caught by this ice again, it’ll be all over for him.

There was a short breath that Todoroki did before he unleashed. He would have to disrupt his breathing, or his focus, because there was no way to avoid this. Even if he doesn’t win, he needs to make sure that he doesn’t lose.

He won’t let it end here. Not when he has this awful weight on his chest whenever he sees that eternally lost expression on Todoroki’s face.

“You… You’re tearing yourself apart out here! Either give up or come at me-” Todoroki’s words cut himself off and realization drew on his face. “Are you… are you fucking kidding me? This whole time, you’re just trying to make me…”

Midoriya doesn’t know what kind of conclusion he just drew, but it made him angry.

“You… did That Man pay you off to do this? You think that this is going to make me change?!”

He barely jumped up in time. This trashed his theory about the breathing, and he made a mental note to adjust that in his notebook. The resulting slide against the cold ice made both of his feet burn and he doesn’t need to look at the ice to know that his blood had probably frozen right above it. Was he lucky that the blood was acting as a cover for him? He made for a quick roll and landed on his feet. He turned and got ready.

If… If he didn’t know any better, he would say that Todoroki’s ice was getting weaker. Midoriya stared and studied for a moment and realized that he was shivering.

The theory that he needed his other quirk, his fire, came back in full force.

He didn’t know why he was hopeful. It wasn’t that he thought he was going to win. No, that kind of naivety was beaten out of him when he was young. This was something else in its entirety. There was this hope in his chest and it made him lift his bleeding arm up and beckon him again.

Again and again. He doesn't care what he’ll lose in this fight if it means that that expression on Todoroki’s face would change. Skin grows back, his blood can be replenished, but a child’s dream is irreplaceable. He wants to return that to Todoroki.

His classmate looks like he wants to be saved, and Midoriya wants to be a hero.

When the young man looks like he’s about to say something else, Midoriya rushes forward. He knows that this isn’t the healthiest way to do it, but for people who can’t speak or properly communicate with others, this is sometimes the best and only option remaining. It would be to just fight and fight and fight each other. To lose themselves to the roar of adrenaline and the rush of the fight, he hopes that right now, Todoroki can forget about everything but the two of them.

Maybe he can’t save him. He doesn't know how to. Maybe this would work. Maybe.

He knows that it worked when a sudden rush of fire comes out. He stares at it, in awe of that beautiful strength and the rush of heat, and it comes swinging at him. He rolled over, skidding and grimacing as his feet slip on his own blood, and his eyes drag back up to the inferno in front of him. His arm stings, and he doesn’t need to look at it to know that it’s burnt.

“Are you satisfied now?” he asked. “Your stupid smile says it all. You bastard, take this seriously.”

They must look like a pair of fools, with grins that don’t quite fit on their bruised and swollen faces, the two stood on the stage like they were the only people in the world. Battered and beaten, bleeding and bruised, the quirkless kid and child prodigy felt as though this was the closest they had ever been to another person.

Midoriya and Todoroki returned to the center of the stage, ignorant to the world around them. Where were they? What were they fighting about? They didn’t remember and it wasn’t a priority anymore. They took a few breaths, and Midoriya pulled out of his southpaw stance to stand in a way that was much more familiar to him.

They locked eyes and moved as one.

As always, Midoriya shot forward like a rocket, uncaring for his bleeding feet, he jumped up to avoid the ice and was hit by a surge of fire. He landed awkwardly on his shoulder and burned his leg as collateral, but he didn’t hesitate. He’s light and comfortable with his body, and from his awkward stance, flayed his legs out and manages to catch Todoroki hard in the sternum. He chokes, loses his breath, his ice withers pathetically around him as his concentration frays. Midoriya doesn’t hesitate and jumped on the opportunity.

Before, he would stop as soon as Todoroki splayed on the ground, but he was merciless when he came at him. He goes swinging at his face, fully intent on pummeling the boy he was straddling. The blood sprayed across the stage and stained their clothes, and he got four good hits in before Todoroki’s natural abilities came bursting in and a flash of fire sent him skidding across the stage.

The stage fell quiet as Todoroki coughed blood out of his mouth.Or maybe the stage was always quiet or maybe he had drowned the sound out. He felt like his ear was ringing. His nose was bleeding profusely and was cracked. He lost a tooth and his eye was bruising so badly he couldn’t see, and he rushed up to his feet. His eyes focused only on Midoriya, who was trembling as he tried to get up.

With the resulting flash of fire, his sleeve and half his torso was open. His scarf was gone, and some of his scars were visible to the world through the ashen state of his skin. He made a fist with his bleeding, bruised hands, and forced himself up. He trembled as he did so, and Todoroki watched as he pulled himself back up onto his feet the same time he did.

But looking at his eyes, it didn’t bother him at all. If they look over the injuries, they would even say that Midoriya looked happy.

“...You crazy bastard,” Todoroki said. “Let’s end this.”

The fire came much easier than he wanted to, but for the moment, all he could see was that grin on his opponent’s face. Midoriya readied himself up, his expression bright.

He fired.

-

Todoroki Shoto, to no one’s shock, won. While everyone else quickly wrote off the end of this battle, there many who just sat and stared and tried to process the end of the battle.

“That was just awful.”

“You know, he is quirkless.”

“And this is just representative of what it’s going to be out there.”

“What… What’s UA thinking, bringing a Quirkless kid in like that? It’s just asking him to die.”

“They should have called the match off much earlier.”

“But man, for that Todoroki is going to be something amazing one day!”

“Yeah, I can wait to see what kind of hero he’ll be like in the future!”

The end result was hardest to accept. As the students who fought, the teachers who judged, and the faculty who watched on with unbiased opinions, the hardest part of any fight was this. The fact that no matter how hard someone fought, the hard work was not seen or recognized.

Midoriya Izuku ends in the Top 8. For a Quirkless person, that was an amazing, commendable feat.

And very few will know that he just found something more important to do than win.

### Sports Fes - Ending at Top Eight

Midoriya opened his eyes in the infirmary bed and took a deep breath. He felt tingly and hot and stiff. He grimaced at the sensation and took a deep breath. First, he would count to backwards from ten to one, then, he’ll try to get up-

“Shounen, you’re awake?”

His eyes snapped open at the sound of his idol’s voice and he shot straight up into a sitting position. He looked at the deflated form and then back to his lap and then back to the man next to him. He grimaced at the pain, panting hard as his heart raced in his chest as all the memories came suddenly flooding back. He looked at his mentor in absolute shock and disgrace as he met those blue eyes and then dragged his eyes down.

“Toshinori, if you’re going to give the boy a hard time, you can just leave right now,” Recovery Girl said from the other side of the room. Midoriya suppressed a shiver at the tone of her voice, and Yagi actually flinched.

“No, no, that wasn’t the intention!” he blurted out, both of his hands up in the universal sign of surrender.

She gave him a scathing look, but when he turned back to his student, Midoriya dropped his head until his forehead was touching the blanket.

There were no words to describe the amount of regret he held in his heart. There was no way for him to even try to beg for forgiveness for making a mockery of the UA Sports Festival Spirit, and for him to make it so personal and to throw away sportsmanship because he couldn’t ignore the way Todoroki looked so lost. He was supposed to show off. He was supposed to try to win.

All Might had put his hopes on his worthless ass, and Midoriya spat on that hope and returned it with his burnt and broken body in the infirmary.

Just thinking about how disappointed All Might would be makes his heart throb painfully in his throat, a mess of heat that he doesn’t know how to sort through. Under the weight of his emotions, he shivers violently.

“Shounen, Midoriya-shounen, please, lift your head. I’m not upset.”

No, he was just disappointed and probably realized how much better it would be if someone else was chosen as the next Symbol of Peace. Someone who actually listened to direction and tried his best to be the best and not get distracted the second he thought someone else might need help.

Todoroki didn’t even want his help.

“Please, Midoriya-shounen.”

He pulled his lips back tightly into a grimace and lifted his head. There was no point in delaying the inevitable. He… He deserved everything that would happen.

“...I am not upset. I just… have a few questions.”

He nodded.

“...Did you… try to save Todoroki-shounen?”

Midoriya hung his head in shame. Try. He didn’t even do it. He gave a nod, and kept his eyes down.

“...That is not something to be ashamed of,” Yagi said, speaking slowly. “I think… I think your actions speak very loudly, Midoriya-shounen. While the… results of this battle isn’t optimal, the sincerity in your actions wasn’t lost to him, even though he had no intention of being helped.”

The young man didn’t look convinced, but there was a glimmer of light in his eyes that Yagi wanted to protect.

The teacher gave his student a big smile, hoping that it would reach him.

“Saving someone that doesn’t want to be saved is also a mark of a good hero, Midoriya. Don’t be ashamed for trying. It’s fine to take pride for what you believe in.”

Midoriya felt tears welling up at his eyes and he nodded twice. His bottom lip trembled and Yagi lifted his hand to pat the boy on his back, when the door suddenly slammed open.

“Midoriya-kun!”

“Deku!”

With his classmates suddenly crowding the door, Yagi yanked his hand back as the shock made him spray blood all down his mouth. He choked a little, and gave a little nod as the others nodded at him and they swarmed him.

“...Todoroki? What are you doing here?”

Everything paused at Mineta’s voice, and everyone turned at once to look back at the door.

They stared at the young man, who stood awkwardly at the door. He felt as though he wasn’t welcomed here, and in all honesty, he understood why. He was the reason why Midoriya was suffering several third-degree burns and was in here at all.

But the young man looked at him and lifted his hand up and beckoned him in. After having that infuriating gesture done to him so many times, he’s surprised that he took so well to it this time.

He walked in.

“I… I was wondering if… if you had some time after this, we could… talk?”

Midoriya stared and nodded.

“No,” Recovery Girl stated, “He needs to rest. You need to rest. You all need to leave. Maybe after the festival, but right now, he needs to get ready for surgery.”

Todoroki’s head snapped over, and all the other kids gasped out at the mention of surgery. Midoriya gave them a tired smile, and waved at them once more.

### Habits

New place, same deal. He isn’t sad or disappointed or anything, but it’s just confirmation for him that people are the same everywhere they go. And UA is no exception.

In fact, since it’s a prestigious high school where only the top of the cream get in, it makes even more sense that these kinds of things happen. He can’t imagine how awful it must feel to lose out against a quirkless nobody.

Concerning the fact that he finished at Top Eight at the Sports Festival and the fact that he was now the newest hot topic as the “Quirkless Hero-To-Be or Cannon-Fodder?” it has gotten exponentially worse. He thinks that it’s good that they have the time to waste though, even if they were wasting it on him.

He wants to have that much free time one day.

Naturally, he doesn’t blame them, for there is nothing to blame. He will take their well-wishes with him as he progresses. As long as he doesn’t ever prove them right, it would be irrefutable proof that he is doing the right thing. For that, he is thankful.

However, he does wish that they would target him and his things and not school property. In that sense, he thinks that everything is the same, anywhere he goes.

His shoe locker is, predictably a mess, and part of the reason why he shows up so early. He cleans it out, gets the dirt out, sprays it down, and is thankful for a lifetime of this preparing him for these moments, as he pulls out a pair of indoor slippers out of his bag.

As he finishes cleaning it up, he feels bad that there are lingering scratches on the locker, but it’s otherwise spotless. It won’t be like that tomorrow morning, but he thinks it’s fine to have something to do.

### Stain -

But when Midoriya saw Todoroki come into the alleyway, lifting his phone up to show off the coordinates that he had texted out to everyone in the class, he knew that he had irrefutable proof. This had meaning. His actions weren’t meaningless. Going to UA wasn’t a mistake.

“Midoriya,” Todoroki said to him, “I heard you.”

The feeling he got when Todoroki said that…. That’s the feeling that he wants to give everyone. He wants people to know that they were heard. They will be saved. That someone cared.

-

The problem was that there were nomus that had abandoned their fight to come and hunt him down. Due to their slow timing, as a result of fighting off the heroes, they came just a few seconds behind Todoroki.

One, sustaining heavy injuries, made a beeline for Midoriya. He ignored the Iida laying on the ground and didn’t pay any mind to the ice coming onto his arm, and strove straight for Midoriya. However, in the heat of battle, it was hard to think about things like that when they were still novices.

Stain, however, noticed.

It didn’t really matter, since the Nomu was making a mess of the alleyway. Stain threw a glance over at Native, the one and only target that would have gotten away unscathed since he started Hero-Hunting, and scowled. He would have to pull back.

Live today. Kill tomorrow.

And then, the railing from above shuddered and fell over him. He was slow in reaction because he was still working out his priorities, and because he was impatient. His mistakes were his own, and he would look at this moment and take a lesson in humility. There was no way he would be able to dodge in time, and braced himself to get ready to run with a bad injury.

Until he was shoved out of the way.

His back skidded against the ground painfully, and for a brief second, he couldn’t believe that someone would take this opportunity to take him out. However, given an opportunity, he supposes that it’s a good thing that they would take this chance.

Imagine his shock when he saw the gentle gaze of the green hero-in-training above him. The young man got off of him, looking down at him as though Stain hadn’t come for his and his friends’ lives several times before. Just a few feet to his left was Native. Did he grab both of them out of the line of fire?

“W-Wha… Did you just save the Hero-Killer?!”

Indeed, Stain thought as he looked to the side where the sizable debris had fallen where he had just been, he wouldn’t have been able to dodge that. This kid was stronger than he looked, if he was able to tackle him safely away from the damage…

Stain’s eyes followed the trail of blood running down his neck. He fixed his grip on his blade, knowing that it would be so, so easy to clear the objective of today.

A hand came to his shoulder, and he stared at where the young man stared at him again. His gaze was meaningful, there was no lingering malice or annoyance. He didn’t look upset and he didn’t look vengeful. Under that gaze, Stain felt as though he was peering straight into his soul, and was seen for who he was.

And whatever the young man saw, his gaze remained kind.

“...Heroes,” he said quietly, a painful-looking smile stretching across his face, like he didn’t know how to smile but he was going to put in his best effort, “Protect people.”

And he should have knocked this kid out. He wasn’t going to kill this kid when he had a future ahead of him. But he should have knocked this kid out, killed Native, and left. He should have.

But he lost his focus (for the second time, really, he needs more training) when something wrapped it’s tail around Midoriya’s middle and wrenched him out of the alleyway.

Stain could have killed Native. It was clear that the hero-in-training that Midoriya came to save and the one that came to save him were both more interested in saving their friend. Stain should have killed Native.

But losing a such a young child to something like this, to that brat Shiragaki no less, felt like a waste.

And so, Stain, the Hero-Killer, threw his blade at the Nomu and jumped.

It was to pay back a debt, of course. It had nothing to do with the fact that that gentle stare that he was given.

But he won’t lie when he said that the look the trainee in green gave him felt nostalgic in a way he couldn’t place.

### Iida Sits With Him

“I must give you my most sincere apology!”

Midoriya, who came in today with a split lip and a swollen cheekbone, stared at Iida like he was an alien. He blinked twice, and then slowly turned over his shoulder to see if he was perhaps talking to someone else.

There was no one behind him, however, and he turned back to see the top of his class president’s head. He stared at it, baffled beyond words, before Iida straightened.

“I will endeavor to no longer shame myself and the name of heroes!”

Midoriya pointed at himself.

Iida nodded, “Yes. I realize that the way I have been acting has been disgraceful, and wish to make proper amends, Midoriya.”

Midoriya truly and honestly wondered what he was doing here. And if this was weird. Did Iida get hit by a stray quirk or something?

“How I have been acting, pretending not to see what is going on… it’s unforgivable. I understand if you do not want to forgive me, but it’s alright. From now on, I will act as a Hero should.”

The green-haired male, looking incredibly confused, couldn’t get another word in before Aizawa came in and chased them to their seats.

-

The next time he had a mini-heart attack, Midoriya was sitting down at his usual place in the cafeteria. He sat, as always, alone, until a tray clattered down in front of him and his head shot up to see Iida sitting down.

“Oh, I’m sorry was someone sitting here?” he asked, genuinely concerned.

His classmate shook his head before ducking his head back down. He swears that the entire cafeteria was watching, as the regular chatter diminished into whispers.

“I see,” Iida replied back, sitting down and getting comfortable in his seat.

His mind made laps around himself in a desperate attempt to figure out why he was sitting with him, and when no conclusions came forward, he looked back up.

“ Letting anyone in class eat alone doesn’t sit well with me. I know that this may be shameless of me, since I haven’t done anything until now, but I… I want to be a better person, a person worthy of the title ‘Ingenium’,” Iida replied back, staring at Midoriya.

The honesty and kindness within those eyes must have been too bright though, since Midoriya dropped his gaze right back down to his lap.

His hands trembled, and hastily, he scrawled a note on his napkin.

>> You’ll be targetted.

“So be it. I’d rather be a target than allow you to fight this alone any longer.”

And Midoriya stared at the young man in front of him. His eyebrows were slightly furrowed, his frowning mouth parted a little, like he wanted to say something but couldn’t find the right words to say. But he sat like that, looking at Iida as though he had grown a second head, for a long moment before his lips twitched uncertainly into a smile. He looked back down at his food and began eating.

And for Iida, who was eating like nothing was wrong and nothing was amiss, he thinks that this is the face Midoriya Izuku makes when he is saved.

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Life with Iida is louder and certain. With Iida, there are rights and wrongs and everything can fall neatly between those two categories. They eat lunches together now. He comes to stand next to his desk and wait for him to pack his bags, talking idly about the lectures and current events. He talks, with his arms accenting his speech, and it fills Midoriya’s entire world with something different.

Before he knows it, Midoriya is texting back his answers. His eyes are gentle and he smiled at the messages left on his phone like they were something precious instead of Iida reminding him safety laws and traffic updates.

### Iida & Todoroki- Post-Stain

Midoriya had closed his eyes, awaiting for the drink to be poured on his head like it always seemed to be, and when he opened his eyes, stared in wonder as Todoroki stood next to him. The taller student had grabbed the other student and his drink before he could ‘accidentally’ spill it on Midoriya again.

“W-What the hell-”

“This is unbecoming of a student at UA,” Iida said, coming from the other side, his expression nearing murderous, “I ask you to please reconsider your actions while you wear our uniform. This is not the behavior our predecessors would have wanted.”

“‘Tch! Why are you acting all goody-two-shoes now?! You didn’t do anything about it before!”

“Yes, you are right! There was something criminal happening right before my very eyes and I had turned away! My failure to see past my clouded eyes for something that is just a memory is my own failure! However! After recognizing something is wrong, turning around and blindly accepting it is something that a Hero should never do!”

His words echoed through the cafeteria.

“...Whatever, screw this.”

The student yanked his arm back and Midorya’s jaw still remained slacked.

He didn’t understand.

“...Honestly, I do not understand how they could have been admitted,” Iida said, sitting down next to Midoriya. “...And I mean what I said. This… disgraceful behavior…. I will put a stop to it. So that I can be a proud hero and a good friend.”

Todoroki sat on the other side of Midoriya, “...Let’s eat. And don’t cry.”

That day, Midoriya thought that his food seemed awfully more salty than usual.

### Long Journey Home

-

He stared at his apartment complex, and for a moment, actually thinks that he’s in the wrong place. On his door, in spray paint and other types of paint are crude drawings and words that people usually call him or write on his desk, but it’s all over his door and walls of his apartment.

His neighbor is stepping out, and he points at him like Deku was holding the spray paint and not his school bag.

“You see this, you fake! Your fraudulent isn’t well-respected in the world! Clean this up! You made this mess!”

It’s nothing he has never heard before. However, it’s not something he expected to start haunting his mother. Standing in his dirty uniform, his face swelling and leg aching, he makes careful certainty to stay standing at full attention, more out of habit than anything.

Eventually, half an hour later, the neighbor gets tired and leaves him be. They get tired, they always get tired, and Midoriya has yet to see someone outyell his patience. He changes his clothes and heads back outside, fully intent on wiping off the paint to the best of his ability before his mother comes home.

He thinks he did a good job, hand-washes the worst of the stains and the smells off his uniform and bag, salvages his notes, manages to get dinner too, but he doesn’t get to start his homework until after all of that. He stays up till the early morning to try and finish it in time. At his desk, he thinks he should fall asleep, but his face hurts, his mom wasn’t home yet, and it’s only a few hours before he has to wake up anyways.

Really, he should be training.

He doesn’t want to go outside, so he does his exercises in his room. He works hard, as he always does. He waits, not too sure what he’s waiting for.

Just like that, something was added to his routine.

-

The swelling does not go down. He has a black eye and the bruise on his cheekbone right underneath it looks much worse than he feels. Guiltily, he’s glad that his mother is sleeping, just so that she doesn’t have to worry about the sorry state her son is in again. He’s just glad that no one’s kidnapped him or beat him up in a while, but he supposes that all the lowly-villains that used to dog him are busy with the League or whatever.

In the meantime, he finds the note his mom left on the table that says that she enjoyed dinner. A quick check in the sink tells him that she didn’t eat. Like mother, like son, he supposes, doing their absolute best to lie to each other so that they don’t have to worry. He packs his lunch and leaves.

He wishes he was a better son.

-

When he gets to school, his face doesn’t hurt or bother him. He’s so used to it that it doesn’t even phase him at this point.

However, Iida and Ochako’s worried expressions were something he has never seen on someone before. It was an expression that never left his mother’s face, of course, but there was something different and a little magical about seeing it on someone else’s face.

He smiles back, immediately and incredibly grateful that he made it to UA.

### Representative Meetings

It was obvious that all the class representatives, extracurricular captains, and the student council will come together for a large meeting. It happens every month, and they were expected to come to take part in the meeting and report back to their class about the things that were coming up.

There were a lot of information that didn’t pertain to them, as first years.

But after the Sports Festival, the mood in the room shifted a little.

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“I mean, since you’re quirkless, this is the least you can do right?”

“And let’s be real here, when you get out there, it won’t be to do hero duties, you know?”

“You should be thankful to your senpais that we’re trying to look after you.”

And so, Midoriya rubs at his temples and keeps working through all the piles and piles of reports.

Watching on Yaoyorozu stares and wonders if there was anyone who worked as hard as Midoriya did for absolutely nothing in return.

-

“...I just think that they’re piling a lot of work onto him!” Yaoyozoru finished quietly.

“...Did Midoriya say anything?” Aizawa responded back.

She blinked back and shook his head.

He shrugged, “Then, there’s nothing I can do. He needs to learn how to say no when there’s too much work. Being able to know when you hit your limit and take a step back is something every responsible adult learns, not just heroes.”

### TodoDeku - Texting

Todoroki feels closer to Midoriya. It could be because the young man never presses him to talk, and he never felt the drive to start conversation, but he feels like the gap between them has closed a lot.

Becoming someone who texts often wasn’t something he expected.

-

Midoriya stared at him for a moment and then gave a soft punch to Todoroki’s chest, right where his heart would rest. His eyes widened in surprise, it didn’t hurt of course, but he was surprised at the action.

As it was Midoriya kept his fist pressed to his heart and gave a big grin. He pulled it away and pulled out his phone to type out something for him to read.

<< You are you. >>

It was such a small and simple thing, and thinking about it, it was so fucking obvious. But Todoroki is 14 and learning how to expand his horizon for the first time, and he’s glad that the first thing he got to see was the spring green of Midoriya’s eyes when he finally smiles back.

“Thank you,” he says quietly.

### Yamada v Aizawa =

“Look, I don’t want to tell you how to run your class, Shota,” Yamada said, uncharacteristically serious as he narrowed his eyes at his old time friend, “But this is getting ridiculous.”

Aizawa arched an eyebrow at him and the blond scowled.

“Don’t look at me like that. I know you know what’s going on. And it’s starting to get really out of hand. Either you need to do something, or I will.”

“It’s my class, Yamada,” Aizawa replied back, “I know what I’m doing.”

“I don’t know! I don’t believe you anymore! There’s a kid in that class, who doesn’t say anything and lets everyone stomp on him all the time. He takes way more shit than anyone else in this building, and you, Shota, I expected you to at least help him!”

“He needs to learn how to ask for help.”

“You think he’s going to go to you, or anyone of us for help? Look at him!”

### BakuDeku - Scars

Bakugo stared at the scar on his neck and grimaced.

“Gross,” he said, wincing away from it. And then he peered at it even closer, “This is why you don’t speak, huh? Guess you are a mute.”

And he.

Midoriya stares at him and thinks it’s funny. He gives this smile to the other boy, and thinks it’s a little funny because of course he doesn’t remember. Midoriya, who has been working so hard to keep this scar away from his prying eyes because he was scared that it would negatively impact the blond and his future at large, realizes what a colossal waste of time that was.

He wants to laugh. He wants to laugh long and hard until he cries and cries and just emote until there is nothing left. He wishes that he could forget as easily as Bakugo could, and wonders what he needs to do to have that kind of strength.

But no sound comes out of him, and he smiles back at Bakugo instead.

### YagiMido - Texting

He slid a phone in front of him, opened to the default texting app. And then, he put a touch-pen into his bandaged hand, ready for Midoriya to silently punch in his answer into the phone.

“It’s marked to send to myself, so it’s alright if you hit send,” Yagi explained quietly. “I think this will ease communications a little better. If you don’t mind, there’s a couple of things that I would like to ask.”

He nodded slowly. This would be one of the first times he really had to depend on technology to communicate his feelings, but the thought that, of all people, Yagi would be interested in knowing what he had to say made his head spin.

### Dorms

The thing about the dorms is that they were suddenly made aware of how hard Midoriya works.

Up before everyone else, by the time the earliest risers are fumbling around downstairs, they’ll catch eye of Midoriya taking his cool-down laps before he heads in to get ready for the morning. He takes an early shower and manages to get completely dressed before he steps out of the shower stall.

He and Iida are the first at the classroom, Iida talking excitedly about the recent current events going on in the world and Midoriya holding on to each of the words. When he has questions, he types and sends them, and Iida is patient in listening. On occasion, Todoroki is with them, looking more asleep than awake, and these occasions became more and more frequent.

The others trickle in, mostly in groups.

### Uraraka & Deku - Smiling

“I noticed that about you,” she said. He looked at her, and her eyes fell back to her feet. “I thought that… whenever you smiled, you looked like you really wanted to cry.”

### These days

These days, if they go out anywhere, Midoriya was always sandwiched between two people. The whispers and the glares remained but no one was brave enough to challenge the entire hero class.

It was so bizarre.

It was made even worse at the look of wonder in Mirodiya's eyes when they did this without complain or prior acknowledgement. It didn't make any sense to him.

### Provisional Licence -

-

Midoriya stared at his score-chart when Iida came up to him.

“How did you do?” his friend asked.

Midoriya flashed his score sheet to him, and the taller man jerked back.

“Goodness!” he gasped, “Two points above passing? I thought for certain that you would…”

Iida’s voice became progressively quieter as his eyes followed the words. The expression on his face turned still and a frown came on his face.

“...To take off points for being unable to speak up when it’s not-”

Midoriya’s hand came up to the man’s wrist, silencing him in an instant. He shook his head, and then pointed at the screen.

He passed, after all.

### Chisaki (2) - A Meeting

“...And to think, after escaping me all those years ago, you would show yourself to me again,” Chisaki said. He chuckled, “How have you been, Izuku? Fate truly works in mysterious ways.”

Mirio looked worriedly between Midoriya’s shocked expression and their target.

But, the real shock came when Midoriya’s arms wrapped around the little blond girl in his hands and he jumped backwards.

“Oi, Deku, what the hell?!” Mirio wanted to shout but managed to keep a lid on his temper, “Hey, Deku, what’s up? Let him have his daughter back.”

Mirio wanted to ensure that they have the best possible way to catch this man and all that he’s involved in. Midoriya, however, remembers a week in this man’s tender, love, and care. When he feels the little girl’s hands bunching up the fabric under his hands, he sees himself.

It was selfish. It would ruin all their plans.

But Midoriya, who had always wanted to be saved, would rather die than let Eri go.

-

Midoriya was taken off the mission lineup. Aside from general insubordination, minor to severe injuries all over his body, and the possibility of losing his provisional license over his, the young girl seemed to just fall apart if he wasn't at his side. It was better for everyone if he stayed at the hospital with her.

"Wait, so you guys are going to let Midoriya go because you learned about what they were doing to her?" Kirishima asked. "That's messed up."

Midoriya stared at the young man to his side, shocked that anyone spoke up for him at all.

"I know that following directions is important, but you're telling me that this girl came out to him, pretty much begging to be saved and we, as heroes-in-training, should ignore it? Because our licence means more?"

### Eri Questionnaire

"We have a couple of questions for you, Eri-chan," the police officer said slowly keeping her voice light and gentle in and effort to emphasize that they weren’t here to hurt her. "Midoriya-kun," she motioned to the door.

Midoriya dipped his head and tried to stand up. He stopped when Eri flung herself at him, gripping his arm tightly in her grip. She buried her face in his bicep, trembling like a leaf.

"Ah, if it makes you more comfortable, he can stay. Will that help?"

Midoriya sat back down, but Eri didn't pull away. He glanced at her, then to the officers, and then to his homeroom teacher.

"I'm sorry," Eri whispered out quietly. "I'm really, really sorry."

The officer tensed, and tried to remain impassive and schooled her emotions.

"You're going to lose your license, right?" She asked quietly. "You're going to lose your license because you helped me. I'm sorry. I'm really, really sorry. Eri will be a good girl from now on. Thank you for saving me."

She gave a loud sniffle.

"Sorry," Aizawa said speaking up, "he's mute."

Eri turned to the young man next to her. "...Did he take that from you, too?"

Midoriya shook his head, and pretended not to notice his homeroom teacher's burning stare.

“...Did someone else?”

He hesitated, and then dropped his hand into her hair. She leaned into the touch, starved for the gentle affection, and her eyes watered.

“I’m sorry,” she said, “I’m a bad girl-”

He wrapped his hand around her shoulder and pulled her gently into his chest. He gave her a one-armed hug, encompassing all of her small body, and he squeezed once before he let go. Pulling out a phone, he typed out for her to see.

>> Heroes save good people so I saved you.

But Eri stared at it, and dropped her eyes in shame. “I don’t… know how to read.”

Midoriya blinked, and Aizawa stepped in to gently relay the words back to her.

The kindness was a critical hit to her and her lonely, starving heart, as Eri then just cried and cried and cried.

### Post-Raid - A Message

And in the final room, whatever it was that they were expecting when they kicked down the room wasn’t this.

There was a single person, cleaned off of all hair and other major distinguishing factors like genitalia and scars were gone. It was in a chair, with their ankles tied to the legs of the chair and the arms tied behind the back of the chair.

Its head was tilted all the way back, and in its mouth were white lilies in full bloom pointing up towards he ceiling. It’s chest cavity was split open with incredible precision, and the ribcage was snapped open to show the hanging organs inside of it. There were green wires wrapped around each organ, helping hold it up.

Where second rib on the left side of the ribcage should have been, there was a bright red rose.

If at all possible, it was a sight that no one wanted to see, especially not the children present. While Uraraka and Asui were safe from the view, Mirio was the one who stumbled onto it, and Midoriya barely a second later. By the time Fatgum, Nighteye, Tamaki, and Kirishima appeared, it was far too late and the young men all got a full view of the leftover visage.

Kirishima went back into the hallway, dry-heaving with a pale-faced Tamaki right by his side. Fatgum looked on worriedly at his two interns, and Nighteye cautiously approached the other two.

Mirio looked sick to his stomach and absolutely ashamed of himself. His mentor placed his hand on his shoulder, and squeezed tightly. The most important thing to do was to reassure him that this wasn’t his fault, and that they will work harder to prevent things like this from happening ever again. He was incredibly hopeful that these weren’t ever humans, but models instead.

And then he turned to the kid that All Might wanted to make his successor. He stared blankly at the body in front of him, holding his hands tightly to his chest, trembling. Looking at the mess their interns were, Nighteye and Fatgum both wished that they could have spared them from this.

-

The raid was, overall, a bust.

However, Eri was safe and away from the man who used her. A large amount of research was recovered in the labs downstairs, and was taken into the labs for further studies. It was clear that they had left in a rush and couldn’t destroy everything. It was a small victory, all things considered.

After all, each and every single one of the Precepts got away.

And Nighteye stared at the message that was left. It was found inside of the body of the victim they found in the last room. It was a message addressed to Midoriya Izuku, with nothing but a map.

There was a black x-mark at the map, and the officer in charge mentioned very, very quietly that it was the apartment address of his intern’s home.

He didn’t know how to feel about that.

H made sure to let UA know that the list of dangerous criminals that wanted the young hero-in-training increased by one.

### School festival

Midoriya has a double-bloody nose. And he shattered three of his fingers.

"And you spent today like this?" Recovery Girl asked quietly.

"Would have probably ignored it if Bloodhound didn't catch it," Present Mic replied, staring at the purple fingers. "Listener… why didn't you let anyone know? Doesn't it hurt?"

As always, there was no response. He gave a deep breath through his nose and the nurse sighed. She pressed a kiss to his knuckles.

"I know I said I don't want to see you here, but that doesn't mean you should hide your injuries from me either."

The young student gave a polite bow in response.

### Eri - sign

Learning sign language is a pain in the ass. And like any language, trying to use it without practice makes using it at all sort of useless. Midoriya would know. He and his mother are the only people he knows that know sign, and even then it was a strain.

His mom couldn’t just keep going out to the classes, when his medical bills locked her into an overtime schedule. And it was just easier to text, especially since they rarely saw each other as it was. There was no one else in his life who would give him the time of day either. So, it was just buried away like it never happened.

So this was a shock.

“Uhm! They said that you… you can’t speak!” she said suddenly. She lifted her hands up, and very slowly, as though it took great concentration, signed at him. “Nice … to… meet… you!”

She stared up at him, her eyes glowing and shining, and Midoriya thinks that he’s been saved.

He’s been saved by a seven year-old girl who has known nothing but torment for her whole life, and he couldn’t even bring him to justice. He feels shame. Shame at letting her down, shame at realizing that he hasn’t changed at all, and feels himself drowning in her bright eyes.

He gave a smile back and kneeled down in front of her. He, very slowly, signed back.

“Nice… to… meet … you… too.”

Someone could have exploded the sun right then and there, and under the radiance of her smile, Midoriya is certain that he wouldn’t have even noticed.

“I… am… Eri! What… is … your… name?”

She signs as she speaks and she’s glowing. Under those expectant eyes, he wants to give her the world.

He signed his name slowly for her, and she signed it with him.

“I… zu…” she asked, sounding it out as she did it with her hands. At his last sign, however, her face crumpled. “I… I don’t know that one.”

Oh, he thinks, his heart aching. She didn’t know her alphabet. She hasn’t learned the entire alphabet, but here she was, trying to make conversation with him. She was trying to communicate with him, learn his name and everything, even though she didn’t know her entire alphabet.

It kept repeating in his head, and the kindness from this young girl who has only known pain hurt more than any injury he has ever sustained. He felt light-headed and his throat closed, like he was having an allergic reaction in response to this tender getsure.

Far, far, far away in his mind, he remembers his mom pressing a kiss to his temple and rubbed his ouchies away because “kids can be cruel”.

“...It’s okay,” Eri said suddenly. Her hand came up to his face, wiping away at the tears that he shamefully shed. “...It’s okay, you’re not alone. I don’t know how to sign that, but I’ll learn.”

Some hero he was. To be helped and saved by someone that he wanted to save. It was laughable. It was pitiable. He wanted to be All Might’s successor like this?

But after an entire childhood learning over and over again that << children are cruel >> and that << boys will be boys >>, an entire childhood being pinned down and facing the decay and the burns and being reassembled to repeat everything all over again, the small hand of this girl was the one that made him cry.

He wiped at his eyes, and gave a big smile back, when she returns it, he swears that he’ll protect this.

-

Down the hallway, Mirio stands with his two best friends. The exceedingly warm scene makes Nejire hide her smile behind her hands, while Tamaki broke out in an unashamed goofy smile. They turn to Mirio, surprised that he hadn’t jumped in by now, and startled at the absolutely guilty expression on his face.

“...Mirio?” Tamaki asked quietly, unused to seeing that face.

The blond trembled, his hands curling tightly into fists at his side, as he gritted his teeth hard.

“...Mirio,” Nejire tried, too.

“...Sorry guys,” Mirio said suddenly. He brought his hand up to rub at his temples, “I… I need a moment.”

“...Mirio, it’s okay,” Tamaki spoke up. “We can’t change what happened, but we can do something about what’s going on now.”

The blond took an extra moment and took a deep breath.

“...Ready?”

Mirio gave a big grin, “You guys are the best.”

And thus, the Big Three walked in to say hello.

-

“Ah? Midoriya!”

Midoriya scrubbed at his eyes harder, and taking a deep breath, steeled himself. He stood up and turned around, relaxing minutely when he saw his seniors walk in. He gave a polite bow and then felt something pull on his pants.

He looked down, to where Eri was deathly pale. Her hands clutched onto his leg, and she hid behind him. He looked at her and then back at the senior. Was something wrong?

“You’re looking good,” Mirio said as he came forward. When he noticed how pale Eri looked, kept his distance and his two friends followed his lead. “How are you feeling?”

Midoriya nodded back and gave him a thumbs-up. The blond laughed at that, but quieted immediately when Eri flinched and buried her head into Midoriya’s leg like the sound scared her.

They stared at her for a moment and Midoriya gave a curt nod to the three. Mirio beamed back, and Midoriya then kneeled down next to Eri.

He lifted his hand, and very slowly clasped his hands in front of him.

“...Oh!” Eri said, brightening immediately, “That one means friends!”

He nodded. He pointed at her, and then pointed at himself, and then clasped his hands.

“...We… We’re friends?”

She titled her head, confused but it was short-lived. She brightened considerably as she looked from Midoriya’s hands to him and then nodded back feverantly.

“Friends!” she said, clasping her hands like how he did.

Midoriya pointed at himself and then at Mirio, and clasped his hands.

Her face fell.

“...You guys are… friends?”

He nodded.

She looked at Mirio, and then at Midoriya, and then down to the ground. “Oh.”

The amount of disappointment she expressed in that was staggering. Tamaki risked a look at the blond, who then kneeled down. The girl took a step back before running to hide behind Midoriya. The young man’s eyes widened and looked to the others in surprise. Her trembling hands gripped the back of Midoriya’s shirt.

“I… My name is Mirio,” he said. “I want to become a hero that saves a million people.” He looked at his hands, “And… And I lost sight of that goal earlier. ...When I saw you with Overhaul,” she flinched at the name, and her whole body trembled as she gripped Midoriya’s shirt with all her strength. Despite that, Mirio forged onwards, knowing that he needed to end this poison now. “I thought about catching the bad guy instead of what I should have been doing.”

He took a deep breath and adjusted his posture. The sudden silence had Eri peeking out, and she gave a quiet gasp as Mirio sat on his knees and placed his forehead on the ground.

“I’m sorry. I should have focused on saving you first. There is no excuse for what I did. I… I’m not saying this so that you feel bad or… or that you have to accept the fact that I am sorry. But I swear that I won’t ever make this mistake again.” he said. He slowly lifted his head up and gave her a grin, “I will, most definitely, become AllMillion.”

Eri’s loosened her hold on Midoriya’s shirt, and slowly, nodded.

It was a start.

### Mirio calls for change

“Oh, it’s you, Deku. I’m surprised you’re still here at all.”

Midoriya doesn’t flinch, but since it’s four of them and one of him, it’s hard to find a way around them. He takes a deep breath, and hopes that they won’t make a mess out of his uniform this time because he hates sitting around in a wet uniform. As it was, they look as annoyed as always for the lack of his response, and it causes them to escalate.

This is a familiar thing, and Midoriya is patient. They will get bored, not bored enough to leave him alone permanently, but bored enough to leave him in about ten, twenty minutes. Of all the things that has happened to him, this really is a step down from what he used to anyways. So whatever.

“Hey, when your senpai’s are asking you something, you should answer them. What, are they not teaching you manners in your hero class?”

One pushes him back into the wall and a fist comes right at his face. He thinks that they must have been incredibly stressed out by their classes, if they’re not using weapons and skipping the usual verbal greetings. He finds this to be a good thing, because then they’ll get tired faster and he can get back to the classroom sooner. He hits the ground and waits. They don’t hit harder than anything he’s ever remembered, which is a shame, because it could have made for a great pain-tolerance training. Instead, it just feels like a waste of time.

And right when the kicks should have come swinging the second year gave a cry in shock and pain and Midoriya’s head snapped up. They might as well have turned to stone as their eyes land on Mirio standing behind them.

The friendly, happy-go-lucky smile on the senior is nowhere to be seen. Instead, he has a stern look on his face as his grip on the second-year’s neck tightens, and the young man gave a strangled cry in return. Vividly, Midoriya feels like he’s back at USJ, staring at the enraged snarl on All Might’s face, and wonders why Mirio wasn’t smiling.

“What the hell is going on here?” he asked.

“M-Mirio-senpai!”

They look uncomfortably at Midoriya, who is just as surprised as them. He stares, mouth gaping open at his senior.

“Ah… nothing is happening.”

The thunderous look on his face didn’t smooth out. And his eyes slid to Midoriya’s slightly ruffled features. Blinking twice, the young man shook his head. He calmly got up to his feet and dusted himself off. He feels his face throbbing, but he’s suffered much worse so he can shrug it off.

“...Alright,” Mirio said, letting go. He gave a big grin, “Man, sorry about scaring you guys. I guess this past internship really frayed my nerves, haha! We really dropped the ball on the last mission, and Midoriya-kun paid the price for it in full. I’m glad he’s out of the hospital, it would be such a shame if he had to head back in already,” he said, deceivingly happy. “But, I’m glad I ran into you, Midoriya! You got a minute? There’s something that Sir wanted me to pass onto you!”

The second-years quickly made themselves sparse after that, and Mirio wrapped his arm around Midoriya’s shoulders and nearly dragged him away. The younger man looked up at his senior, surprised at this whole thing, and that made the blond feel even worse.

“...How long has this been going on?” he asked, and then, thinking about it, sighed, “No, it’s been like this since you’ve gotten here, huh?”

Midoriya looked up at him and shrugged back. He kept his eyes forward and when Mirio pulled them into a quieter corridor, finally let go. His shoulders hit the wall, and he looks up at his senior the same way he looked at the second years who had cornered him. A blank-faced expression as he accepts the fate that will be thrown at him.

It… It bothers Mirio a lot more than he let on.

“...I know this isn’t my place to say anything, but Midoriya, I want to remind you that I’m here. You don’t… You’re not alone. If you reach out, someone will take your hand. I will take your hand.”

The green-haired man stared at him, his eyes deceivingly clear. He nodded.

“And we’re heroes you know. There’s going to be a lot of people that we meet that are going to be looking up to us. And they’ll reflect based off of what we show them. So let’s do our best to ask for help when we need it and give help whenever, so that we can teach that to all the people watching us, okay?”

Midoriya nodded, but Mirio didn’t doubt for a second that he didn’t get it at all.

He gave a polite bow, and turned to leave.

### Mirio v Aizawa

“Aizawa-sensei,” Mirio said, appearing at the door of the teacher’s lounge at the start of lunch, “A moment, please?”

### Aizawa Steps It Up - Hallway

One of the other kids, as they always do, push against his shoulder a little harder, and Midoriya is so used to this that he rolls with the punches. But he’s holding papers in his hands, because it’s his duty as the Class Representative to do things like this, and the papers flutter in a mess on the ground. He doesn’t hesitate and bends down to start picking it up like he has always done.

“Augh, get out of the way. If you can’t handle it, drop out.”

He doesn’t hesitate or blink an eye, and wonders if he should just wait for this to pass or if he should just pretend it’s not happening. The second option usually leads to escalation of behavior, but he wants to hurry up and get this in to Ectoplasm so that he can go back and eat his lunch before the next bell.

He goes with the first option, and the boy who ran into him steps on his hand. He presses down, hard, and Midoriya is so accustomed to this that all he can do is hope is that the paper won’t have footsteps on them. He wants to spend all of his free time exercising, and he can’t do that if the student council asks him to turn in quality work and refill out the paperwork in his hands.

“...If someone drops their things, it’s only rational to help them out so that the mess is cleaned up as fast as possible so the minimal amount of people get hurt slipping on paper.”

All the blood in his veins turn to ice, and his head snaps over to where his homeroom teacher was standing down the hall. Midoriya eyes met his for a brief second before he closed them and took a deep breath, accepting his fate. This would happen right now.

“Eh? Ah…” the student next to him stuttered, just as shocked as Midoriya was about this particular turn-out of events. Under Aizawa’s no nonsense gaze, he freezes like he caught in Medusa’s gaze.

“I saw everything. You ran into him. Now, stop wasting my time with this elementary crap and pick it up.”

“Y-Yes sir!”

The boy quickly leaned down to help him collect the papers, and when he scowled and shot Midoriya a glare, the young man realized what he should be doing and quickly gathered the rest of the paper. Once he had it in a stack, he gave the boy who helped him a bow, but before any other words could be said, Aizawa’s quiet steps cut him off.

“Apologize and get back to lunch,” Aizawa said, “Honestly. You’re in high school now, act like it. Don’t waste my time with this again.”

“Y-Yes sir!” The kid, head tucked down. He turned to Midoriya and gave the most unapologetic apology consisting of a muttered “sorry” through his teeth with eyes that promised pain before scampering off.

But that’s not what Midoriya was stuck on. He turned to openly gawk at his homeroom teacher. He stared, in no little amount of shock at what had occurred. Did… Did Aizawa-sensei really just… defend him? No way, right? The thought made his eyes water and his throat tight. There was no way that was the case. He dropped his gaze onto the papers in his hands.

How could that be? Why would he? He’s never defended him before? Why start now? What… what was going on?

“...Don’t look so shocked,” Aizawa said, nearly looming over him, and he nearly jumped in his shock because he didn’t even realize that his teacher was so close to him, “Don’t you have someplace to be?”

He blinked twice, the words registering and he gave a hasty nod. He sniffled embarrassingly loudly, and ran off at nearly full speed to get this to Ectoplasm. He got to the Teacher’s Lounge, breathed a sigh of relief when no one was there, and placed the papers down onto his math teacher’s desk. He took a deep breath and rubbed at his eyes.

Was Aizawa feeling okay? He never stepped in before. Did he need help? Did Midoriya look like he, at that moment, need help? He was so used to this, that he didn’t even think that anyone would notice or care. This was normal, wasn’t it? It was normal to ignore the quirkless kid when things like this happened to him, because it was normal and it was natural. And he was fine with that. He was fine with this.

In all honesty, if every instant of this shit were to suddenly stop, he feels like his life would stop. What would he be if people didn’t badger him? The work that they passed to him, who would have to get it done then? If they didn’t vent their stress out on him, then where, who, would they vent it to?

So yeah, he was fine with this. It was better that it was him than someone who didn’t know how to take it and handle it. It’s the right thing to do. It’s what a hero would do.

And yet, and yet, he felt his whole world kilter, and truly, honestly wondered if he was losing his mind.

He placed the papers onto Ectoplasm’s desk, dusting them off and rushed out of the Teachers’ Lounge.

### Kouta v Eri - Izuku Gets Outed

“No!” Eri snapped back, “You’re lying!”

“I’m not lying, ugly!”

“I’m not ugly, stupid!”

Mandalay and Aizawa came running into the main lounge, both shocked about the fact that the two quietest children were screaming at each other.

“Hey, you guys, what gives?!” Mandalay called out, grabbing Kouta’s arm and pulling him away while Aizawa herded Eri behind him.

“Kouta-kun is a meanie-head!”

“It’s better than being ugly!”

“Hey, guys!”

At then, Midoriya and Shoji walked in. The two had clearly come from their late night work-out, as they both had a sheen of sweat on them with a towel wrapped around their necks. They looked towards the commotion in their commons area, confused by why no one greeted them and what was going on.

“His name is Izuku, not Deku! He taught me how to sign that!”

“His name is Deku, he’s my hero! He even said that!”

“Nu-uh, Izuku can’t speak-”

“Deku can speak! He just doesn't have anything to say to you!”

“Kouta, knock it off!”

“Izuku, that’s a lie right!?” Eri spun to him, struggling against Aizawa’s hold.

“Don’t call for him. He’s on my side, right?!” Kouta snapped back.

Mandalay and Aizawa turned to the young man, taking in his pale features and tired complexion. It was clear that the young man probably just wanted to go straight to bed at the moment, and really, they should go ahead and put the kids to sleep.

But, surprising them all, Midoriya walked towards them with his phone in his hand.

He typed something up and gestured for the two kids to come closer.

<< Speaking hurts. >>

They read it aloud, in unison, and then turned to Midoriya, who took his hand and lifted it up to pull his scarf down a little, revealing the bandages on his neck to them. With some effort, he managed to tear it off so that the kids could see the ugly mess of scars that decorated it.

He moved the scarf back to cover it up.

“...M-Muscular…” Kouta gaped at him.

He shook his head, ignorant to how cold his teacher felt in that moment.

“...Chi..saki?” Eri whispered out.

He shook his head again. The implications rang loudly, even in the heads of small children, and he pocketed his phone. With his hands free, he gave them both head pats and stood up. They were silent, staring at the ground while contemplating the knowledge that they had received.

He stood up, ready to leave them when Kouta spoke up.

“How come no one came to save you?” he asked quietly.

Eri’s eyes threatened to spill all the tears that suddenly gathered in her eyes and he shook his head. He typed something on his phone and gave it back.

“...They did?” Kouta read aloud, “How… How can you say that! Your neck is like that! So like.. .every time you try to … try to speak, you’re just going to be reminded of why it hurts! And every time you don’t speak, you’ll be reminded that you can’t! And that… that’s not being saved…”

But Eri, understanding the tragedy of being put into the mercy of someone who views life and death as mere tools in his kit, sniffled loudly.

“Stupid Kouta, that’s why he wants to be a hero.”

Midoriya nodded again, satisfied, and this time, the kids let him go. When he stood up straighter, ready to go take a shower and retire for the evening, he looked up to catch the absolutely heartbroken look on Mandalay’s face and the pinched expression on Aizawa. He gave them a nod, typing on his phone out a message for them.

<Goodnight.>

He gave them a polite bow, signed goodnight to Eri, gave one last pat to Kouta, and headed towards the stairwell when he realized that Shoji was just staring at him too. He tilted his head in confusion and his classmate dropped his eyes to his neck, and then to the ground.

“I…” he looked down, “I’m sorry,” he said.

Midoria thinks that he’s an exceedingly kind man.

<<It’s from a long time ago>> he texted to him, a small smile on his face. <<Thank you though.>>

### Midoriya Tells

Midoriya’s handwriting is neat. Despite the subject matter, his hand doesn’t tremble and his expression doesn’t shift. When Yagi slowly read the paper, he feels an uncharacteristic amount of rage and a ridiculous amount of understanding. The scars that he has seen, the injuries that Midoriya can withstand, the impeccable ability that this young man has to just take on unjustified hate, gets all the confirmation he never wanted as he read the simple sentence that he wrote.

>> I wasn’t a runaway when I was younger. I got taken by people often and beaten up by them.

He sat in front of Yagi, rubbing his trembling hands together. He kept his head down, looking as though he was awaiting judgement.

“Okay,” Yagi said, his heart breaking. “I believe you.”

Midoriya head snapped up at him, eyes wide and slacked-jaw, and Yagi rode out the wave of grief when the tears slipped out of the corner of his eyes.

“...Why?”

The first time Yagi hears Midoriya’s voice, it’s because the young man could not understand why anyone would believe him. The thought is suffocating.

“My boy,” Yagi said quietly, “You’re not the type to lie.”

All Might couldn’t save everyone. He couldn’t save this one boy. All Might, like many others, had turned a blind eye to what he had seen, accepting the current reality as the truth and now he knows better.

But Yagi could believe him. Yagi would believe him. Yagi will stand next to him, for as long as he needed to, and if he can’t save this boy, then he’ll help him heal.

Midoriya stared at him, like he didn’t know who this man was, as the tears came flowing down his face. He stared for a couple of more heartbeats before the drops from his eyes came onto his hands, and he flinched out of his trance. He looked down at his hands, like he didn’t realize why they were wet and then lifted his hands to his face.

“I… I didn’t want it,” he said, his voice a small croak that echoed in the empty office.

“...I believe you.”

“I… I was scared.”

“Yes, I believe you.”

He stared for a long, long time, tears freely streaming down his face, like a dam had broken, and Yagi didn’t want to think about how long this boy had to stifle his cries if he had mastered the ability to cry so silently.

“It hurt… It hurt so bad.”

“...I believe you.”

Midoriya bowed his head, his shoulders shaking.

“...Thank you.”

Yagi… Yagi heard him. He felt the genuine gratitude that flowed from those words. He did. And he also knew that he didn’t deserve it. And as he watched his successor break down in front of him, he hoped that one day, he would.

-

“Midoriya-shounen… I think we should tell the others,” Yagi said, speaking quietly and softly. “I am… ill equipped to help you the way you deserve to be. I want you to be able to heal from this.”

Midoriya stared at him, a rare expression of fear on his face, and he hesitated. Yagi wonders why it took them so long to figure this out. He waited another beat, and then spoke again.

“It doesn’t have to be now. Or tomorrow. Or this week. But it is something that… that you should think about.”

Midoriya stared at his trembling hands.

“...Stronger,” Midoriya whispered quietly. “I want to… be stronger. I...” his hand came up to his throat, his eyebrows furrowing and Yagi wanted to tell him it was okay, it didn’t need to be now, but Midoriya was nothing but tough. “...I want to be a hero.”

### First Step - BakuDeku

Midoriya took a deep long breath. There was… a thousand things that he wanted to say. He wanted to be strong enough to say it. But as it was, right when the words came to his throat, his throat will clog up and a pain would lace through his entire body.

And he isn’t sure what it was, or how to explain how to felt in that moment, but Bakugo looked so, so, so lost.

“Fucking christ! Don’t die! Oh god, you’re not allowed to die! Holy shit, if you die, I’m going to kill you.”

While this wouldn’t be the first time he had been stabbed, Midoriya thinks that this was the first time someone shouted something so kind as he bled out. It was surprisingly nice.

“Shut up, Bakugo!”

“Deku! Deku, I swear to god-”

Midoriya took a deep breath, and lifted his hand up. There was a brief pause before Bakugo took the hand into his trembling once. He wonders why the blond, who was always so confident and certain, could be shaking, and supposes that it’s pretty cold today. He shivers. He didn’t think it was that cold before, but perhaps the temperature did drop. Or maybe he had lost too much blood.

“...Ka...Kacchan,” he rasped out.

He had to say it. There was no going back.

“S-Sorry,” he gasped out, feeling the blood pool in his mouth. Hm, maybe it wasn’t bloodloss then.

“Shut up. Shut up! You can say whatever you want later, okay, you fuckshit! I’ll listen to whatever stupid shit you say so just... Just don’t close your eyes!”

The blond tried his commlink again. His eyes darting from it to his childhood friend next to him, and Midoriya wondered what was going on for him to look so panicked.

“Fucking Christ, we need back up! We need back-up right now! Where the fuck is the emergency aid?!”

Midoriya’s eye sight got a little darker, and wished that, if this was the last thing he was going to see, that Bakugo could smile for him.

“...Wanted… to see you… hero.”

With all his strength, he lifted his hand up more to gently caress the slackened expression on Bakugo’s face with a big grin. He hopes that it actually comes as a grin, instead of his usual nervous smile.

“...It’s okay...” he said quietly, “This is … perfect.”

He closed his eyes.

### Interlude: Deku Cried For Help

The young man tilted his head back, and wondered why no one ever explained how someone <asks for help>.

### AiDeku - Respect vs Confusion

“...If you save someone only based by what you know about their circumstance,” Todoroki said very quietly, his gaze sharpening as he stared down his homeroom teacher, “Then I don’t think it’s that you wanted to save him at all.”

It was a deep dig, but Aizawa felt it. It was well deserved too, no matter how he tried to dice it.

### S